

# 2015 News and Updates

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## **The Church Historian's Press Publishes Final Installment of Joseph Smith's Journals**

*November 30, 2015*

The Church Historian's Press today announced the release of the latest volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, which chronicles the final months of the life of Joseph Smith, founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844* “captures the complexity of Joseph Smith’s life and provide a framework for understanding the events of the final year of the prophet’s life, unmatched by any other single contemporaneous source,” said volume coeditor Alex D. Smith.

The volume features the conclusion of Joseph Smith’s second Nauvoo journal, which was kept by scribe Willard Richards. Richards’s handwriting is idiosyncratic and often hurried, and many entries are brief and cryptic. As a result, many passages of the journal have been misread and misunderstood. After several years of painstaking analysis by historians with *The Joseph Smith Papers*, many obscure notations are now explained, providing new insight into the final months of Joseph Smith’s life.

Covering May 1843 through June 1844, this volume illuminates a time that was both turbulent and incredibly productive for the Mormon prophet. During this period, Joseph Smith served as the highly visible and determined leader of one of the largest cities in Illinois and of a church with members spread throughout the United States and other countries. He balanced roles as church president and prophet, mayor, judge, and militia leader, all while responding to escalating conflict.

This volume covers topics such as the establishment of an organization called the Council of Fifty and Joseph Smith's candidacy for United States president. It also documents many of Joseph Smith's sermons on subjects such as salvation, resurrection, baptism for the dead, priesthood ordinances, a multitiered heaven, and humanity's potential to become like God. The journal also offers readers a glimpse into Smith's activities concerning the temple, since during this time he continued to introduce temple ordinances, including eternal and plural marriage ceremonies, to a growing number of people.

The journal also refers to conspiracies against Joseph Smith's life. Controversial teachings, the practice of plural marriage, Smith's growing political power, and other factors had led to loud criticism and threats toward Smith and other church leaders, by both disaffected church members and prominent opponents in surrounding communities. After Nauvoo civic leaders declared the anti-Mormon newspaper the *Nauvoo Expositor* a public nuisance and destroyed its press, Smith and several of his associates were arrested. On 27 June 1844, a mob swarmed the jail in Carthage, Illinois, where Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were being held, and killed both men.

Included as appendixes to *Journals, Volume 3* are two additional sources—never before published—that shed light on the final two weeks of Joseph Smith's life: an excerpt from Willard Richards's journal for 23–27 June and an account of Smith's 10–22 June activities made by William Clayton. Given these scribes' proximity to Smith, their records provide invaluable primary source material for studying the events leading to his death.

Scholar Jonathan A. Stapley writes that this volume “transforms the standards by which scholars and interested observers access the heart of Joseph Smith's documentary record. With a level of professionalism and disclosure that is pointedly incredible, the editors present the most intimate details of the Mormon prophet's personal and religious life with generous contextualization. This work will be referenced for generations.”

This volume allows readers to study Smith's daily activities and personality as well as to better situate him and the faith he founded within nineteenth-century American history. Aided by comprehensive annotation, this final installment of

Joseph Smith's journals constitutes an essential primary source for research into his life.

*The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers, will be available beginning November 30, 2015, at [Deseret Book](#), [Amazon](#), and many other retail outlets. Visit the Purchase section of the Joseph Smith Papers website for more information.

## Join Our Twitter Chat for Journals, Volume 3

*November 10, 2015*

The third and final volume of the Journals series will be published on November 30! On Thursday, December 3, we'll be hosting a Twitter chat on our Church History account ([@churchhistory](#)) to discuss this new volume.

### How to Join

- Join us via Twitter on Thursday, Dec. 3, at 3 p.m. MST.
- Follow [@churchhistory](#) on Twitter, and tweet us your questions and comments.
- Join the conversation using the hashtag [#JSPapers](#).

Share with us your thoughts about the Joseph Smith Papers Project, and ask our historians questions about their work. We've invited volume editors [Alex Smith](#), [Andrew Hedges](#) and [Brent Rogers](#) to share their insights and lead the conversation.

Be sure you add the hashtag [#JSPapers](#) to all of your tweets.

To learn more about *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, [click here](#).

## New Content on Joseph Smith Papers Website

*October 27, 2015*

The Joseph Smith Papers Project announces the addition of the following new content to its website, [josephsmithpapers.org](#):

- Nearly one hundred and fifty more documents from 1841, including<sup>16</sup> priesthood licenses and land deeds for Nauvoo, Illinois.
- Documents from six legal cases in Ohio in which Joseph Smith was involved.
- Earliest manuscript copy of the revelation on eternal marriage (now D&C 132).
- Topic page for documents found in the current Pearl of Great Price of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- New and updated reference material, including source citations for eighteen biographical descriptions.

The [Events](#) page has also been redesigned, making navigation easier and aiding more in-depth research.

Also recently added are documents from ten legal cases from New York and Ohio, all documents and annotation as published in *Documents, Volume 2*, and photographs of the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon taken in 1923. In the coming months more documents from the Documents, Journals, Histories, Revelations and Translations, Administrative Records, and Legal, Business and Financial Records series will be added. Eventually the website will contain images and/or transcripts of all extant and available Joseph Smith papers.

## Joseph Smith Papers Project Publishes Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon

*August 4, 2015*

Today, the Joseph Smith Papers Project announced the release of *Revelations and Translations, Volume 3: Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, the eleventh published volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers*.

This volume features the most complete early text of the Book of Mormon—the printer's manuscript. After Joseph Smith dictated the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon and hired a printer, he had a second copy of the text made, now known as the printer's manuscript. The creation of the printer's manuscript allowed the original manuscript to be kept safe while the second copy was taken

to the Palmyra, New York, print shop of E. B. Grandin, where it was used to set type for the first edition of the Book of Mormon (1830).

The publication of *Revelations and Translations, Volume 3: Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* builds on decades of earlier work by volume editor Royal Skousen and represents a major milestone in the longstanding collaboration between historians from the Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ (formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). For more than 100 years, the Community of Christ has preserved the priceless printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon, and the manuscript appears in this volume with their generous permission.

This volume is published in two parts, each a full-color, oversized book intended to showcase this historic manuscript. For the first time ever, each page of the manuscript is presented as a high-resolution photograph and accompanied by a color-coded transcript that shows which scribe made each change to the manuscript. In addition to the photographs and transcripts of the manuscript, this volume also includes

- a list of scribes and printers involved in the creation of the manuscript and the printing of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon;
- an extensive chart tracking the use of the manuscript to publish various early editions;
- explanatory introductions that track the provenance of the manuscript and give the history of Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon; and
- never-before-seen photographs of a seer stone Joseph Smith likely used in the translation of the Book of Mormon.

An accompanying article on the history of the Book of Mormon translation, written by Joseph Smith Papers scholars, will appear in the October 2015 issue of the *Ensign*, an official periodical of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The article is [available online](#) now.

For more information or to purchase the volume, see the [Purchase](#) page. A set of photographs of the printer's manuscript, taken in 1923, were consulted by the

volume editors for the transcripts found in *Revelations and Translations, Volume 3*. The photographs may be viewed on the Joseph Smith Papers website.

## New Content on Joseph Smith Papers Website

July 28, 2015

The Joseph Smith Papers Project announces the inauguration of the Legal, Business, and Financial Records series on its website, josephsmithpapers.org. Twenty-eight legal documents are now published on the website, which will eventually include documents from more than two hundred court cases where Joseph Smith was plaintiff, defendant, witness, or judge. These cases represent Joseph Smith's civil and criminal proceedings in the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa. Ecclesiastical court cases involving Joseph Smith will be featured in the Documents series. The business and financial records include records and documents detailing Joseph Smith's business and financial transactions, such as account books, ledgers, invoices, receipts, and property transactions.

Case proceedings featured in the Legal, Business, and Financial Records series are organized by state, the name of the case, and the date the case was filed. Individual documents are organized chronologically within each case. Business and financial records with direct ties to case proceedings are grouped with their associated court cases. Other business and financial records will be featured chronologically within the Legal, Business, and Financial Records series.

Documents for the following legal cases are now available:

- *Hurlbut v. Smith*, 6 February 1819
- *People v. Smith*, 20 March 1826
- *State of Ohio v. Hurlbut*, 21 December 1833
- *Rounds qui tam v. Smith*, 10 February 1837
- *Lake for the use of Quinn v. Millet et al.*, 8 July 1837
- *Millet for the use of Smith v. Woodstock*, 15 July 1837
- *Allen v. Smith et al.*, 3 January 1838
- *Wilder and Strong v. Rounds*, 16 January 1838
- *Spencer v. Cahoon et al.*, 25 January 1838

- *Allen v. Granger*, 16 August 1837

Additional legal cases involving JS as plaintiff, defendant, witness, or judge are forthcoming. A large subset of the Legal, Business, and Financial Records series will be published in print volumes, while the complete series will be published on this website. As with items in the Documents series, these legal documents are being published on the web in advance of print publication; introductions and annotation will be added for these and other cases on the website following their publication in print. The volume editors of the Legal, Business, and Financial Records series are Gordon A. Madsen and Jeffrey N. Walker, with Walker as the series editor.

Also added to the website are all documents and annotation as published in *Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*. Most of the documents were already on this website, but now all annotation has been included, as well as introductions and other reference material.

## Joseph Smith Papers Volumes Receive Favorable Reviews

*May 1, 2015*

Volumes of The Joseph Smith Papers were recently reviewed in three publications:

In the *Journal of the Early Republic*, Kenneth P. Minkema, executive editor of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* and of the Jonathan Edwards Center & Online Archive at Yale University, reviewed volumes 1 and 2 of the Documents series. He stated, “Well researched, scrupulously proofread, and expertly annotated, these volumes, and this edition, will surely stand as the definitive one for many generations.”

In *BYU Studies Quarterly*, James B. Allen, an emeritus professor of history at Brigham Young University and former assistant church historian of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, wrote of the Histories series, “The new *Joseph Smith Papers* volumes are well worth studying. . . . The painstaking editing and production ensure complete accuracy, and the editorial introductions provide insight into the efforts to produce a history of the Church during Joseph Smith’s



lifetime. The editors have also provided several valuable study aids. The footnotes are copious and carefully prepared, providing important explanations and insights in addition to references to the source material.”

Thomas A. Wayment, associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University, wrote in the *Religious Educator*, “The volumes [of the Joseph Smith Papers] published so far represent the high-water mark for LDS documentary editing. . . . The editors should be commended for their painstaking attention to detail and the overall quality of the publications.”

To read more reviews of the Joseph Smith Papers, visit our [Reviews](#) and [Endorsements](#) pages.

## New Content on Joseph Smith Papers Website

*April 28, 2015*

The Joseph Smith Papers Project announces the addition of the following new content to its website, [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org):

- Joseph Smith’s accounts of his first vision of Deity, translated into nine languages: Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Links to the original accounts in English are available [here](#).
- Images and transcript of volume D-1 of the Manuscript History of the Church; images of volumes E-1 and F-1. All six volumes of this history are now on this website. Additionally, hundreds of footnotes have been added to volumes A-1 and B-1, pointing readers to the original sources used to compile the history.
- All documents and annotation as published in *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*. Most of the documents were already on this website, but now all annotation has been included, as well as introductions and other reference material.
- Sixty-five documents dating from October through December 1840, including priesthood licenses and land sales for Nauvoo, Illinois.
- New and updated reference material, including source citations for 127 biographical descriptions.



Also recently added are more than four hundred documents from January through September 1840, the transcript of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, and four suggested lesson plans for using the Joseph Smith Papers in the classroom. In the coming months more documents from the Documents, Journals, Histories, Revelations and Translations, Administrative Records, and Legal, Business, and Financial Records series will be added. Eventually the website will contain images and/or transcripts of all extant and available Joseph Smith papers.

## Joseph Smith Papers Holds Twitter Event #AskJSP

*April 27, 2015*

On 10 March 2015, four Joseph Smith Papers historians—Matthew C. Godfrey, Robin Scott Jensen, Spencer W. McBride, and Brent M. Rogers—conducted the first live question-and-answer session the project has held via Twitter. Participants tweeted their questions using the hashtag #AskJSP and the historians answered using the LDS Church History Library's Twitter account, @churchhistory.

The event was an effort to connect with followers of the Papers and answer their questions. "In this digital age, ink, pen, and paper are being replaced by keyboard, screen, and web interface," said Robin Scott Jensen, associate managing historian. "Combining the two worlds brings history to life."

The event created a surge in engagement on the Church History Twitter account. "We sent seventy-nine tweets and got engagement from over a thousand people," said Laurel Teuscher, the social media producer who organized and oversaw the session. The tweets reached a record number of individuals for the account.

Matthew C. Godfrey, who is the JSP's managing historian, stated, "I was hoping that this would enable people to get to know the project and our goals a bit better. I think we accomplished that. All of the questions were very thoughtful." He added that the chat was "a great way to engage the general public about the project and get them excited for what we are producing about Joseph Smith and early Mormon history."

The event was also significant for the historians involved. Spencer W. McBride, coeditor of the Documents series, said the event was more than just an opportunity for the project “to demonstrate the historical value of Joseph Smith’s papers in an innovative way.” The Twitter chat, he said, “provided me greater insights into how others view my work. As a historian and writer, gaining a better understanding of my audience is always a helpful thing.”

To see a transcript of the chat, visit

<http://ldschurchhistory.tumblr.com/post/113462094263/joseph-smith-papers-twitter-chat>.

## Joseph Smith Papers Contributors Present at Conference

*June 30, 2015*

Many contributors to the Joseph Smith Papers presented at the fiftieth annual conference of the Mormon History Association, held in Provo, Utah, on 4–7 June 2015.

These presentations included the following:

Alexander L. Baugh, “‘I Will Soften the Hearts of the People’: Mormon–Gentile Relations in Clay County, Missouri, 1833–1839”

Christopher James Blythe, “Martyrdom Canes and Vernacular Mormonism”

Terryl L. Givens, “Joseph Smith and Translation: Notes Toward a Theoretical Framework”

William G. Hartley, “Captain Edward Bunker and His 1856 Handcart Company”

Andrew H. Hedges, “Joseph Smith, Thomas Ford, and the Third Extradition Attempt”

Richard L. Jensen, “A Record Keeping Culture? The Rise, Fall, and Partial Resuscitation of Local Latter-day Saint Historical Records”

Laurie Maffly-Kipp and Reid Neilson, “Legacies of Leonard Arrington”

Jeffrey Mahas, “‘Joseph Smith the Proclaimer of Jefferson Democracy, of Free Trade and Sailors Rights and Protection of Person and Property’: Political Slogans, American Memory, and the Presidential Election of 1844”

Spencer W. McBride, “The Shattering of American Idealism: The Misplaced Expectations of the 1839 Mormon Delegation to the Federal Government”

Reid L. Neilson, “Proclaiming the Gospel: Missionary Work and the General Epistles”

Brent M. Rogers, Shannon Kelly, Elizabeth A. Kuehn, and Christian Heimburger, “The Unfamiliar Saints: Insights from the Joseph Smith Papers”

R. Eric Smith, “‘We Feel Very Proud of Our Relief Society Building’: The History of the Newcastle, Utah, Ward Relief Society Hall, 1920–1970”

Charlotte Hansen Terry, “Rhetoric versus Reality: Mormon Women’s Diaries and Domesticity in the Early Twentieth Century”

Nathan N. Waite, “Having a Great Time, Wish You Were Here: Reporting the First Years in the Great Salt Lake Valley”

Matthew C. Godfrey, Robin Scott Jensen, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Brent M. Rogers, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Grant Underwood chaired sessions during the conference.

The Mormon History Association was created in 1965 as an affiliate of the American Historical Association and became a separate organization in 1972. Its purpose is to encourage understanding and scholarship in the field of Mormon history.

## **Sources behind the Manuscript History Identified**

*June 9, 2015*

After years of research, Dean C. Jessee is publishing his research on the creation of Joseph Smith’s 1838–1856 history (often called the “Manuscript History of the Church”) online. Jessee has worked with Joseph Smith’s papers for more than

forty years. He has served as general editor of the Joseph Smith Papers Project and is currently a member of the project's National Advisory Board.

The manuscript history was compiled by several scribes and clerks of the church—including George W. Robinson, James Mulholland, Robert B. Thompson, William W. Phelps, Willard Richards, and others—from 1838 to 1856 in an effort to record the history of Joseph Smith and the church he founded. However, the primary sources were not always recorded in the history and many have, until now, remained undocumented. Jessee's work, which involves identifying primary sources for the information presented in the history, lends a critical eye to the text, helping researchers understand its origins and its place within Mormon historical studies.

Images and transcripts of volumes A-1 through D-1 are currently available on the Joseph Smith Papers website. Images of volumes E-1 and F-1 are also available on the site, with transcripts forthcoming. Footnotes containing Jessee's research have already been added to the transcripts of volumes A-1 and B-1. We will continue to publish this work online as it becomes available.

## ***Documents, Volume 3* Honored with Indexing Award**

*May 15, 2015*

The American Society for Indexing has selected *Documents, Volume 3* for the 2015 ASI/EIS Award for Publishing Excellence in Indexing.

When evaluating candidates for the award, judges looked for indexes that “address the text with high standards of index quality and are well-typeset, providing the user with easy, excellent access to the material in the book.” Indexes are judged on the following criteria: elegance, usability, coverage, analysis, access, cross-referencing, accuracy, and style.

The Church Historian's Press and staff of the Joseph Smith Papers Project are grateful for the expertise and talent of Kate Mertes, the volume's indexer, who created an index that assists readers in accessing the volume's documents and annotation.

Mertes and a representative from the Church Historian's Press received the award at the conference of the American Society for Indexing earlier this month. At the conference, Mertes remarked, "I am pleased to say that, in working with the good people at the Church Historian's Press, I have found a client who is a full partner in the indexing process, and their input and feedback have been essential in creating an index I can really be proud of."

Visit the ASI website to read the [full announcement](#), and visit the volume's page to learn more about *Documents, Volume 3*.

## First Vision Accounts Now Available in Ten Languages

*March 25, 2015*

Joseph Smith's firsthand accounts of his first vision of Deity are now available on [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org) in ten languages. Readers and researchers can now read these accounts in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. English transcripts are given side-by-side with the documents' images; links to those documents are available [here](#).

This marks the first time the Papers has translated material into non-English languages. We are pleased to be able to offer these foundational Mormon history documents to an international audience.

## Project Historians Take On New Roles

*March 20, 2015*

The Joseph Smith Papers recently implemented two noteworthy staff changes. Managing historian Matthew C. Godfrey has been promoted to general editor, joining Matthew J. Grow and Ronald K. Esplin in that position. Mark Ashurst-McGee will assume the role of senior research and review editor, replacing Richard L. Jensen, who will retire later this year.

Godfrey and Ashurst-McGee have been vital to the success of the Joseph Smith Papers, and they will continue to benefit the project with their expertise in history and documentary editing.

Full biographies of these historians and the rest of the Joseph Smith Papers team are available on the Project Team page.

## Joseph Smith Papers Now Available as E-books

March 9, 2015

The Joseph Smith Papers recently made previously published volumes available in a more accessible, electronic format.

*Documents*, volumes 1, 2, and 3; *Histories*, volumes 1 and 2; and *Journals*, volumes 1 and 2 are now available on Amazon and Deseret Bookshelf as e-books. Forthcoming volumes will be released in both print and electronic format.

## New Content on Joseph Smith Papers Website

February 13, 2015

The Joseph Smith Papers Project announces the addition of the following new content to its website, josephsmithpapers.org:

- Transcript of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.
- Nearly two hundred documents dating from April through September 1840, including priesthood licenses and land sales for what would become Nauvoo, Illinois.
- Images for Parley P. Pratt's *Late Persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints*. This is the second edition of Pratt's *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri upon the Mormons*.
- Introduction to the Draft Notes to the Manuscript History of the Church.
- Four suggested lesson plans for using the Joseph Smith Papers in the classroom.
- New and updated reference material, including source citations for fifteen biographical descriptions and sixteen new and updated glossary entries.

Also recently added are more than two hundred documents from January through March 1840, images for the Book of the Law of the Lord, and updates to

the Calendar of Documents. In the coming months more documents from the Documents, Journals, Histories, Revelations and Translations, Legal and Business Records, and Administrative Records series will be added. Eventually the website will contain images and/or transcripts of all extant and available Joseph Smith papers.

## **Collaboration with FamilySearch Connects Readers and Ancestors**

*January 7, 2015*

The Joseph Smith Papers has collaborated with FamilySearch to identify living descendants of the more than six hundred individuals identified in the documents published on our website thus far. The purpose of the partnership is to help those descendants access documents, stories, and additional information about their ancestors found on josephsmithpapers.org.

“Though the primary audience for the Joseph Smith Papers is scholars,” said Ben Godfrey, product manager for the Joseph Smith Papers website, “an important secondary audience includes members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who have an interest in the church’s history. This collaboration with FamilySearch helps us reach members of this important audience.” The effort will also serve people who are interested in their family history and who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

So far the effort has reached roughly 250,000 people, and it is expected to reach 500,000 descendants in all. The project is already seeing results; the first phase of the campaign generated the most visits and unique visitors to the site on a single day since the Joseph Smith Papers site was launched.

Read the [press release](#) from FamilySearch or [click here](#) to see if your ancestors have been identified in the Joseph Smith Papers.



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